

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

June 24, 2005

TO: K. Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: D. Grover and W. Linzau, Hanford Site Representatives
SUBJ: Activity Report for the Week Ending June 24, 2005

Demonstration Bulk Vitrification System (DBVS): The project is slowing down its design and construction efforts due to budget restraints. The budget problems were caused by an unexpected increase in equipment and construction costs. In response, CH2M Hill is suspending the procurement of some components and their principal subcontractor, AMEC, has reduced their allocated personnel to the project from 147 to 7 people. CH2M Hill is drawing upon their parent organization for engineering support to continue the design. They are working to get the remaining priority design packages to the State Department of Ecology by the end of the fiscal year. CH2M Hill and the Office of River Protection are working together to prioritize ongoing projects but final budget decisions have not been made. The potential delay in the DBVS could be as long as six months with an operational readiness review in June 2006.

Emergency Preparedness (EP): The Hanford site conducted its annual emergency preparedness field exercise this week. The purpose of the exercise is to provide emergency responders from Hanford, Washington and Oregon States, and the counties of Benton, Franklin, and Grant the opportunity to respond to a simulated accident involving the release of radioactive materials. The on-site exercise was conducted the first day with involvement of the Federal Radiological Monitoring and Assessment Center with representatives from various federal, state, and local radiological response organizations on the second day to evaluate offsite recovery planning. The scenario this year involved a fire and release from drums in the Solid Waste Storage and Disposal Facility. It included simulation of a worker fatality, two injured and contaminated workers, and six additional contaminated workers. This represents a significant increase in planned contaminated individuals compared to previous years. The facility radiological response at the event scene was well conducted with quick establishment and maintenance of hot and cold zones. The facility successfully demonstrated the egress of all contaminated workers and emergency responders as opposed to only a sample in previous years. This allowed a good evaluation of the availability of supplies and personnel to adequately deal with the situation. One area that appeared to need improvement was the first aid provided to the injured workers by co-workers and first responders. The injured appeared to receive little help or evaluation except relocation to a safe area, despite repeatedly taking actions that would enhance internal deposition of contamination via inhalation, ingestion, and injection.

During the exercise DOE personnel participated in their roles in responding to an emergency and the DOE EP program manager observed activities in various locations. However, no formal DOE assessment was performed of the contractor or DOE performance during the exercise. The site reps discussed this with the program manager and advised her on DOE resources that could be used to perform the oversight and assessment function, e.g., facility representative, engineering group subject matter experts.